

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 497

By Turner J

A RESOLUTION to congratulate Ayoka Pond on being recognized as a 2013 Woman of Excellence by the *New Tri-State Defender*.

WHEREAS, throughout the years, women in Memphis, Tennessee have been leaders in the areas of civic responsibility, business endeavors, and community involvement; and

WHEREAS, for the past five years, the *New Tri-State Defender*, a Memphis-based newspaper, has honored over two-hundred and fifty outstanding African-American women as part of its “Women of Excellence” annual presentation; and

WHEREAS, the 2013 selection of honorees includes fifty such women, who have achieved success as executives, business owners, community leaders, ministers, non-profit executives, media personalities, physicians, educators, and role models in their respective fields; and

WHEREAS, these honorees were chosen from among 100 nominations, based upon proven success within their profession or industry, and upon their efforts to encourage others while remaining highly active in community service and organizational involvement; and

WHEREAS, one honoree is Ayoka Pond, Director of Public Research at Baptist Memorial Health Care, who is charged with providing leadership and direction relative to government and legislative matters impacting patient care or business operations; and

WHEREAS, as the public relations manager for Baptist Memorial Health Care, Ayoka Pond supervises and supports a team of public relations professionals who provide media relations, issues management, coaching, and counsel to Baptist’s 14 hospitals and dozens of entities and services; and

WHEREAS, her daily responsibilities include editing the public relations team's written materials, advising the public relations team when needed, and monitoring Baptist's media coverage; and

WHEREAS, she also teaches communication training classes for Baptist colleagues, helps produce a monthly newsmagazine show that airs on Memphis' PBS affiliate, and maintains relationships with local and national reporters; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, Ayoka Pond began her career at Baptist as an intern and was hired as a public relations specialist in May 1999; and

WHEREAS, she earned a master of arts degree in journalism from the University of Memphis in 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Sixth Annual *New Tri-State Defender's* Women of Excellence awards will be celebrated on April 27, 2013, at the Memphis Botanic Gardens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby congratulate Ayoka Pond on being recognized as a 2013 Woman of Excellence by the *New Tri-State Defender*, commend Ms. Pond, along with the other forty-nine phenomenal women who were chosen as this year's honorees, for her unwavering commitment and dedication to the highest principles of service and leadership, and wish this exceptional lady all the best in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sixth Annual *New Tri-State Defender's* Women of Excellence celebration be honored for shedding light on the contributions of Memphis area women whose lives and careers have had a positive impact on others.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.